

**Concordia
University
Students'
Association inc**

**Association des
Etudiants et Etudiantes
de l'Université
Concordia inc**



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REPORT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Submitted October 11, 1983

OVERVIEW

In November of 1982 the long awaited Status of Women Report was released and from the moment of its release it was surrounded by controversy with most observers expressing disappointment in the report.

We of this committee support the report in principle. It is doubtful that any thinking person would deny that the plight of women of the Concordia community had for too long been overlooked and this report was the first concerted effort to accumulate data on this subject and to direct the focus of all segments of the community to the inequities suffered by the women of that community.

Unfortunately the Report committee's job was hampered by such things as insufficient funding; lack of constant participation; lack of time and the lack of access of important data. One blatant example of the last point is the fact that the statistics given for professors salaries stop at 1976 as the members of the committee were not given data after that date. This, of course, makes one question how 'factual' the data are, for instance, are the pay scales in 1982 the same as or equivalent to those of 1976? The committee also fell into the trap of making assumptions and using fallacious reasoning, for example we are told that in 1978 of 1877 political science degrees, at all levels, 560 went to women. Furthermore, of the 1877, 232 were at the Master of PhD level. The report then goes on to say 'It is reasonable to assume that some of these graduate degrees were awarded to women. Therefore it is possible to refute the argument that no qualified women are available in those fields.' It is our belief that unless it can be statistically shown how many, if any, of the 232 were women it is impossible to refute the argument as stated.

We also find Recommendation 54 (b) to be totally unacceptable to keep a vacant full-time faculty position open until a woman can be found seems a bit asinine, self-defeating and certainly not in the best interest of either the students or the university. Moreover, what if there are no

women qualified in that area? It is our belief that this recommendation would promote discrimination and not affirmative action.

In spite of the above, we have found some of the recommendations are worthwhile and should be implemented as soon as possible; for example: 19-23 dealing with improving security on both campuses, running self-defense courses for women and informing women of the dangers of sexual assault and how to avoid them.

29 - informing women of the wide range of career opportunities available

33 - advertising encouraging women to enter non-traditional fields of study.

37 - that the genuine financial situation of males and females be taken into consideration when loans are being allocated.

41 - course material should be examined for sexual bias and either be discarded or offered with an explanation.

48 - that the athletic programmes be examined for gender discrimination.

57 - that male and female faculty achieve parity and salaries based on gender discrimination be eliminated.

67 - that senior management personnel make a commitment to work towards the elimination of all sexist practices within the work area before being granted employment.

Because of the amount to be done and the time in which it must be done in order to be effective, it is felt that there should be no post of an Assistant Vice-Rector created but rather an evaluation and implementation committee be founded.

RECOMMENDATIONS DEALING WITH CUSA

When examining the role of a students' association, the first and foremost ideological assumption is that the association must be representative of the student body. Without this cohesive student voice, an association cannot possibly be thought to fulfill the basic premises that ensures representative action, and student activism. This having been said, CUSA must evaluate its role in presenting student opinions that are indicative of the state of university affairs, the most important affair being that of the status of women at Concordia.

In examining the recommendations that were suggested by Concordia Committee on the Status of Women, regarding CUSA, one immediately notices the disparity between those subsections of the recommendations that are implementable, and those that are not. To analyze these subsections one by one has been a major task of the CUSA Committee on the Status of Women. Our findings are as follows:

RE: Recommendation #44 which reads:

"That CUSA make use of its resources to educate and inform students on women's issues."

A recommendation of the CUSA Committee suggested that "CUSA Executives and members of the Status of Women Committee (one female, one male) visit all English CEGEPS and a few French ones to talk about CUSA and the programs that are available." This will serve to encourage women to enter non-traditional male-dominated fields. Student Services or Guidance Services hopefully will help us with this. Since this could be considered a community service then there are possibilities that the university would fund the project.

A number of the other recommendations suggested in #44 can be dealt with by an all-encompassing information blitz, which would focus on the problems of women students, and would therefore create the necessary awareness about sexual harassment, discrimination, sexual assault, representation of minority women, and general classroom atmosphere for women.

It was also agreed that any women with CUSA, should take it upon herself to be a positive role model for other women who may be thinking of involving herself with CUSA.

RE: Recommendation #45 which reads:

" That CUSA prohibit the use of student funds to publish material that discriminates, in any manner whatsoever, against women "

This recommendation has already resolved itself by the formation of the Concordia Press Council (CPC).

RE: Recommendation #46 which reads:

" That CUSA, in a committee comprised of at least 50% women, study the status of women in Concordia University undergraduate student government " .

The committee decided that the need for studying the suggestions put forth in the report, is to gain background information on areas that CUSA could be weak. The question arose as to what defines a student leader. The proportional representation of women on university, and student bodies have been increasing steadily in the past few years. With regards to the Board of Directors (formally the Legislative Council) more and more women have been seeking diversified positions. For Co-Presidents the trend has been 2 men; 1 man, 1 woman; 2 men; 1 man, 1 woman; and 2 men. Generally women executives make up from 2 - 5 positions out of the total positions available (around 11). Regarding Senate: usually student representatives are composed of mostly males, with a showing of from 4-5 females in a yearly time period (out of a total of 17). Regarding Board of Governors, there are usually 1 or 2 women at all times (out of 4).

Subsections 46.2 to 46.6 were found to be difficult to define, owing to their sketchy and ambiguous nature. The study of these subsections are interesting, in the fact that they will show where women have been, however, for the committees purposes they had no real bearing on the status of women.

RE: Recommendation #47 which reads:

" That CUSA provide active role models for women wishing to participate in student politics, by requiring that student representation on all levels of student and university government include at least one woman, and where possible 50%."

Owing to the nature of an elected student government, it is difficult to instigate quotas on male/female representation. By definition " student and university government" would include every single committee of the university, where there is student representation. Although it would be desirable to have women represented on all committees, in practicality because of the time constraints of students, it would be an improbability, without severely overworking those women representatives that we have. The CUSA Committee is also against having " token" women placed on committees, for the sole reason of their gender, regardless of their competency. However, it was decided that "all things being equal, women should be preferentially chosen over men until their representation as a proportion, is equal to the registered population of the Concordia Community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

BE IT RESOLVED THAT CUSA reiterates its support and commitment to equality between men and women.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT in light of this commitment the Board of Directors direct its representatives to support the creation of an Evaluation and Implementation Committee on the Status of Women at Concordia

This committee would include representatives of each of the following constituencies:

- CUSA
- CUNASA
- CUFA
- GSA
- Part time faculty and staff

It would have the responsibility to:

- a) decide priorities of action and research
- b) administer funds allocated to that effect

It would be a Rector's working committee with the power to implement the recommendations arising from this research and would provide stipends or other forms of benefits to ensure a degree of continuity in membership.

The committee would have an office in Bishops Court with a full-time secretary.

And it would be subject to a re-evaluation of its mandate five years after its constitution.

Respectfully presented on October 11, 1983
by the Board of Directors Committee on the
Status of Women.